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Turkey: Demonstrations both for and against the government during the recent tour of western Turkey by top opposition leaders are evidence of increasing political bitterness in Turkey. The government may take further repressive measures against its principal opposition, the Republican People's party.

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DAILY BRIEF

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Turkey May Ban Opposition Party

The violence and disorders which occurred during the recent political tour of western Turkey by opposition leader and former President Ismet Inonu reflect increasing bitterness between government and opposition supporters. The Menderes government may make use of these disorders as a pretext to carry out its long-standing threat to ban Inonu's Republican People's party (RPP).

In Usak on 1 May, Inonu and the other RPP legislators accompanying him were stoned, and special security measures were taken in Manisa after Inonu was denied permission to speak. On 3 May police manhandled members of the crowd welcoming Inonu in the port city of Izmir, and the plant of a pro-RPP newspaper was set on fire. When Inonu returned to Istanbul on 4 May, his car was attacked by progovernment elements. Police used tear gas to disperse supporters who sought to welcome him at party headquarters.

Inonu, a strong critic of government restrictions on press and individual freedoms, has made veiled comparisons between Menderes and former Iraqi Premier Nuri Said. According to the RPP press, the government has taken steps to strip Inonu of his parliamentary immunity so he could be tried for statements insulting to Menderes.

The opposition in Turkey is accustomed to working under restraints by the government, but violent attacks on the 74-year-old Inonu, long revered as a military hero and associate of Ataturk, reflect an unusual degree of political tension. If Inonu were to be injured in future disorders, there might be a strong popular antigovernment response and even pro-Inonu pressure on the government by the Turkish Army.

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